



The Lake District is a very popular tourist destination. All land above 3,000 feet (914 metres) in England is in this area.

MOUNTAINS, LAKES AND DAFFODILS

The English Lake District

The Lake District, or just the Lakes or Lakeland, in the north-west of England is one of the most picturesque (attractive) regions in Britain. With its high mountains, green forests and shimmering lakes it is a very popular tourist destination. The beauty of the Lakes has inspired many poets and is associated with the poetry of William Wordsworth and other so-called Lake Poets.

The landscape was shaped by **glaciers**³ during the last ice age 16,000 years ago. The ice moved downhill from the **peaks**⁴ and created deep valleys, which later filled with water and became the lakes. If you are wondering how many actual lakes there are in the Lake District, there is only one, the Bassenthwaite Lake, because all the other 'lakes' are called 'meres', 'waters' or 'tarns' (terms for various types of lakes). The **barren**⁵ high areas overlooking the lakes are called fells, meaning mountains. Scafell Pike is the highest peak in the Lake District (and the highest mountain in England), reaching 978 metres above sea level.

History

In the 17th century the Lake District was seen as a wild place with **impassable**⁶ mountains. It was rare for travellers to go there. By the end of the 18th century, more people were choosing to visit it, partly because of the danger of travelling abroad during wars in Europe. In 1778 Father Thomas West

wrote a guide to the Lakes and this was the start of real tourism in the area.

Between 1952 and 1965, Alfred Wainwright wrote *A Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells*, with detailed drawings and maps of 214 peaks, as well as stories about the area. This further increased interest in the Lakes and now walkers compete to see how many of the Wainwright Peaks they can climb in their lifetime.

The Lake District National Park was established in 1951. It owes a lot to Beatrix Potter, author of many classic children's books (e.g. *The Tales of Peter Rabbit*). As a child she spent her holidays in the Lake District and later decided to protect and preserve it. She bought land in the area **to prevent it from being broken up**⁷ and gave it to the National Trust.

A dangerous paradise

Outdoor activities people can enjoy in the Lake District range from climbing, walking and cycling to sailing and canoeing. Also popular are art and photography



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courses based at the lakes. Many people just go there to relax and enjoy the wonderful scenery, especially to see the daffodils in the spring and the kaleidoscope of autumn colours in the forests.

However, the beautiful landscape of the Lakes also holds hidden dangers. Tourists and even experienced walkers sometimes have accidents and get into trouble on



The Castlerigg Stone Circle was probably constructed more than 5,000 years ago and nobody knows its real purpose. The stone circle, or rather an oval, is about 30 m wide, with the tallest stone being more than 2 m high.



Windermere is the largest lake in England. It is about 17 km long, but very narrow – its maximum width is only about 1.5 km. Such long and narrow lakes, usually formed by glaciers, are called 'ribbon lakes'.

the fells and peaks. The weather can be bright and sunny but it can change very quickly; fog reduces visibility and rocks become **slippery**⁸. Rescuers deal with over a hundred incidents each year. They either carry the injured to safety or, if there is a serious problem, they call a rescue helicopter.

Tricky weather

The character of the Lake District is partly formed by the climate. Sunny clear days

do happen but there's lots of rain, fog and clouds. For at least one third of the year, it's very windy. Sometimes the wind is so strong that it's difficult to stand up when climbing on the peaks and **ridges**⁹.

People must take notice of the weather forecast before they **set off**¹⁰. Sometimes even organisations get it wrong. Each year there is a race across the fells called the Original Mountain Marathon. One year the weather forecast was bad but the organisers decided to **go ahead**¹¹ with the race. In **gale force wind**¹² and **driving rain**¹³ 1,700 runners were 'lost' overnight. By the next day they had been found, but it highlighted the dangers of ignoring the weather forecast.

Land of sheep

Sheep farming is the main agricultural activity in the Lake District. The sheep live on the fells and there are no fences. This is because the sheep have a historical memory of their home area. Generations of sheep have lived in the area where they were born and they don't get lost. The locals say that the sheep are 'heafed'. Heaf is a local word meaning home territory. After the **foot and mouth epidemic**¹⁴ in 2001, when thousands of sheep were **slaughtered**¹⁵, new sheep were brought into the area. Electric fences are being used for these animals until they can learn where their home is.

Nigel Haward (UK)



LAKE POETS

The Lake Poets were a group of British Romantic poets who lived in the Lake District and were inspired by its beauty. The most famous poets from the group are William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). Wordsworth wrote one of the best-known poems in English literature, called "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud". The poem was inspired by a walk in the Lake District, where he came across lots of daffodils. Here is the first verse of the poem. Can you imagine what the poet saw?

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host of golden daffodils
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

(**o'er** – over; **vale** – valley; **host** – many; **to flutter** – třepotat se; **breeze** – light wind)

WATCH OUT!

Careless tourists sometimes get into trouble in the Lake District. Some incidents from the rescuers' **log book**¹⁶ include:

*A couple got lost when it became dark. They had no map, compass or **torch**¹⁷. The only light they could use to attract attention was the flash on their camera.*

*A woman fell two metres from the top of a large **boulder**¹⁸. She had climbed the rock to avoid a large **puddle**¹⁹ that was in her way across the path. Ironically, she injured herself when she fell into the puddle.*



VOCABULARY

- ¹ **daffodil** ['dæfədɪl] – narcis
² **shimmering** ['ʃɪmərɪŋ] – třpytící se
³ **glacier** ['glæsiə, 'gleɪs-] – ledovec
⁴ **peak** [pi:k] – vrchol, hora
⁵ **barren** ['bær(ə)n] – pustý, nehostinný

- ⁶ **impassable** [ɪm'pɑ:səb(ə)] – neschůdný
⁷ **to prevent it from being broken up** – aby ho zachránila před rozdrobením
⁸ **slippery** ['slɪp(ə)rɪ] – kluzký
⁹ **ridge** [rɪdʒ] – hřeben (hory)
¹⁰ **to set off** – vyrazit (na cestu)
¹¹ **to go ahead** – pokračovat
¹² **gale force wind** [geɪl fɔ:s] – víchřice
¹³ **driving rain** – déšť hnaný větrem
¹⁴ **foot and mouth epidemic** [epɪ'demɪk] – epidemie kulhavky a slintavky

- ¹⁵ **to slaughter** ['slɔ:tə] – porazit (zvíře)
¹⁶ **log book** – kniha záznamů
¹⁷ **torch** [tɔ:tʃ] – baterka
¹⁸ **boulder** ['bəʊldə] – balvan
¹⁹ **puddle** ['pʌd(ə)] – louže